Activities Week

I commented at this time last week on the positive reports coming from the various elements of our Activities Week and I am pleased to say that these continued through the remaining days and the week finished very successfully. Having the opportunity to see our students in the field as they take on new challenges, including developing their leadership, is a great privilege and I was very impressed by all I saw last week.

Once again I offer special thanks to the many staff who took themselves away from family to make all of this possible. As I will say again at Speech Day tomorrow, we are very fortunate to have so many people here who happily make commitments at this level.

Suck It Up, Buttercup

Our Master in Charge of Triathlon, Jim Pennington, had a quick turn around from his week with Surf Lifesaving to take over 30 students to Tamworth early on Saturday morning to compete in the annual ‘Suck it up Buttercup’ event. Jim has reported in some detail on the event and in recommending that to you, I encourage you to read it in the context of all those students just returning from a demanding week in the bush or at the coast.

Given the choice of a sleep in or a 10km obstacle race, they chose the race and that is impressive.

Year 10 Steps Program

Through Monday and Tuesday of this last week of the school year our Year 10 students travelled through a series of 8 life skills sessions that recognise their particular stage in their school and life journey. The subject matter was very broad, as is fitting a representation of some of the skills needed in adult life. From management of finances to ironing, conversation and home handyman skills, legal issues for adolescents, the woman’s perspective on what makes good young men, what healthy masculinity looks like, dining etiquette and what handshakes tell us, it was a journey of useful snapshots that I hope will be remembered, at least in part.

Transition to Senior School Program

Students in Year 8 are focused today on their preparation for Senior School program. These presentations, again organized by our Director of Pastoral Care, take students through the opportunities, expectations and routines of Senior School. The step up from Middle to Senior School is a significant one, demanding a lift in maturity and independence in all aspects of life, and it is important that students are well informed about what they can expect from the School and what the School will expect from them.
2015 Speech Days

The final events for the year are our two speech days today and tomorrow. The Junior School Speech Day in the Memorial Hall this afternoon will welcome the prominent Australian composer and conductor Paul Jarman as special guest. Mr Jarman is working with Junior School students this morning and already having a special and very positive impact.

Tomorrow morning, Michael Crossland will speak to the Middle and Senior School Speech Day audience in the gym, delivering his very personal and inspirational message. He is a captivating speaker and his story, which was broadcast on Australian Stories, is a powerful one.

I look forward to seeing families at one or both of these events as we finish the school year and to wishing all a happy Christmas and holiday break.

Mr Murray Guest
Headmaster

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Week 9**

**Wednesday 2 November**
- Board Meeting
- Members Meeting
- Junior School closes
- Junior School Speech Day

**Thursday 3 December**
- Middle/Senior School Speech Day
- Rowers depart for Grafton Head of the River

**Holiday Events**

3-7 December
- Grafton Head of the River

7-11 December
- Mountain Bike Christian Camp (Scotts Head).

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**Clothing Shop Holiday Opening Hours**

- Wednesday 2 Dec – Open as usual 1.30 p.m. until 5.30 p.m.
- Thursday 3 December – immediately after Speech Day finishes until 3.00 p.m.
- Friday 4 December – CLOSED
- Only open by appointment during the holidays. Please use this link to book an appointment time.
- Wednesday 27 January – 9.00 a.m. until 5.30 p.m.
- Thursday 28 January – as usual 10.00 a.m. until 2.00 p.m.
- Friday 29 January – as usual 1.30 p.m. until 5.00 p.m.

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**Student Travel**

**Parents of boarders approved for Private Vehicle Conveyance Subsidy**

Please ensure the diary for travel undertaken with your son or daughter in the car this semester has been submitted by the close of business on Thursday 3 December so claims can be processed without delay.

Click here for link to travel diary proforma.

Any questions re new applications or claim can be directed to Mrs Meg Sadler by email to msadler@as.edu.au
As the school year winds down this week it is a good time to reflect on the ways we punctuate the flow of everyday life with events of significance – holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, social celebrations, performances, graduations, beginnings, endings. Events of significance provide us with ‘coat-hangers’ for the stories of our lives. We make meaning by creating narratives both small and large. That is because, as humans, that is the way we are – creatures that symbolise our experiences. When we fail to do that, life becomes one-dimensional and we become a bit like a cardboard cut-outs. We shape our lives by punctuating them.

Christmas holidays are also times of transition – leaving the old behind and embracing the emergence of the new. Transitions are times of ending something and beginning again, times of movement and re-orientation. They can be welcome and at the same time, uncomfortable. Moving up a school grade level with new teachers, maybe anticipating a new school, becoming a boarder for the first time, and so on, can be times of some uncertainty and insecurity. However, living through the transitions and learning more about ourselves, helps us to grow and mature. Through adaptation to the changes and transitions that punctuate our lives, we become more resilient.

So, at this point of the year, make the punctuation meaningful.

Mr Rob Hadfield
School Counsellor
I love Christmas time! With Christmas comes holidays, summer, there’s time to catch up with friends and family, there’s food, and because we cook too much on Christmas day there’s great toasties to be had in the days following. Then there is back yard cricket, the beach, pools, cricket on the TV – even day night test matches. However, when all is said and done, and not too appear overly shallow, my favourite thing is the present. Now I’m not going lie to you, sure I like to give presents, but that’s not what I’m talking about, I’m talking about receiving, getting, being the recipient. Now let me get a little bold with you here, I think the most important thing about Christmas is getting that perfect gift.

Now there I was one Christmas when I was lad, in fact I was a lad about to become a man. I knew at this coming of age I would receive a cricket bat – a bat of my very own. A bat that would mark my entry into manhood. This bat couldn’t be any old bat – I assumed that just like my brother had received, it would be a Gray Nicholls – a sweet chunk of willow hand crafted for my batting pleasure and for the devastation of any bowler who be prepared to throw leather in my vicinity. Now, I knew where Mum and Dad would hide gifts (in my sister’s wardrobe). So just to be sure, just to ease my troubled pre-pubescent mind, I wondered into my sister’s room quickly slid opened her door, took a glance sufficient to see the outlined of what was surely going to produce glory, then just as quickly I shut it again. Christmas morn, there under the tree, a distinctly cricket bat shaped present with my name on it. When the time came to unwrap, I did so with great delight…but to my disgust I found a generic brand cricket bat – not at Gray Nic, but a Mick Simmonds… such disappointment.

Now, I still maintain that the getting is better than receiving at Christmas time. Why?

Because it’s not about us, it’s not about our feeling good when someone loves their present, or when we feel disappointed or elated when get the gift from our loved ones. It’s about the gift that has already been given. The tradition of giving and receiving gifts on Christmas day is to remind us of the gift that we have already been offered by God. What is it?

Look at John 1:12:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

It’s the gift of the having the right to become children of God, the children who receive the inheritance of eternal life. This is a great gift! No disappointment there. But I say it’s the receiving of the gift that is the most important thing. If you shun the gift, if you refuse to take it, you cannot benefit from it – you can’t assume you are the child of God who will receive eternal life, it comes with receiving the gift offered.

At Christmas the most important thing is the receiving of the gift that comes from Jesus coming into this world living dying and rising. Receive him as Lord, receive him as saviour, it’s the most important thing this Christmas.
C Coy Annual Camp

The 2015 program concluded with our Annual Camp last week. Activities included canoeing, abseiling, fieldcraft, trekking and navigation, all culminating in the much enjoyed Platoon Games on the final night. In this sequential program, younger cadets are challenged in a way that prepares them for the next step. I am confident that these boys are ready for B Company and wish them well for 2016.

Ms Fiona Taber
DRAGON SCHOOL, OXFORD

GAP YEAR POSITIONS 2017

We are seeking to appoint a number of enthusiastic Gap Year students for the 2017 calendar year (i.e. January-December) into the following positions:

STOOGES (TEACHING ASSISTANTS)

A Stooge will be responsible to the Senior Master and will work closely with all teaching staff assisting them in lessons, with administration and the coaching of sports.

Closing date for receipt of Stooge applications – 19 December 2015

MATRONS

A Matron will be responsible to the appointed Houseparent and/or Joint Heads of Boarding. They will live in the Boarding House and work closely with the Houseparent, supporting them in their role.

We are also seeking to appoint a Matron in the Dragon Health Centre (DHC) to support the DHC staff. There are no qualifications needed, however some basic first aid skills and experience with young children would be an advantage.

Closing date for receipt of Matron applications – February 2016

Job descriptions: Stooge, Boarding House Matron, School Matron & Health Centre Matron.

The online application form should be completed and three written references provided (on the Dragon School reference pro-forma) by e-mail to human.resources@dragonschool.org with the heading ‘2017 Gap Application’

Please read the Visa Guidelines for Stooges and Matrons before submitting your application.
Work hard – play hard – rest well

There is no shortage of opportunities for TAS students to challenge themselves. I was impressed but not surprised when I saw students congregating at 7am on Saturday morning. After a week of intense physical activity; trekking, canoeing, canyoning, lifesaving or fire fighting, 27 boys were preparing to board a bus to Tamworth, to compete in the Suck It Up Buttercup 10km adventure challenge. You have to admire the commitment!

People will tell you that the key to improved performance is hard work. Although, I agree that this is important, it is equally necessary to rest. Both our bodies and our minds do not respond well to constant pressure. They require time to relax, reflect, refresh, recharge and recover. The body needs stress to stimulate an adaptation. However, without recovery there is no time for the body to adjust itself and the performance will spiral constantly downwards.

The holidays offer the rare opportunity for a concentrated period of development for our rowers, cast and crew of Bye Bye Birdie, mountain bikers, cricketers and forensic scientists. However, it also offers the chance to recover, spend time with family and friends; re-connect with those parts of our lives that perhaps are neglected during a busy term.

Take the time now to reflect on your accomplishments and growth over the past year, cherish the challenges and the lessons learned, be thankful for every gift you have received and have a safe, happy and restful Christmas.

Mr Will Caldwell
Director of Co-curricular
‘Suck it up Buttercup’

A busy week of activities was not enough to sap the energy of 31 eager and enthusiastic athletes. At 7:20am the boys gathered at school, ready for the drive to Tamworth and the ‘Suck it up Buttercup’ Adventure Race. Held at the ALEC, the event is 10km in distance, with competitors having to pass/clear/hurdle/jump/climb/crawl or slither through 42 obstacles. Launching out of the gates at 9:30, the race commenced by running through the cattle yards, then over fences and out into the paddocks. There the boys were to meet the first of many varied obstacles. Crawling under mesh netting in deep mud pits, there can be no better way to start the day! A group consisting of Lewis Taylor, Bayley Fellowes, Sam Finlayson, Jack Boydell, Angus Webber and Lachlan Knowles cleared out early, setting a cracking pace. The rest of the students buddied up in groups of three-six and proceeded on their adventure. Some of the more challenging obstacles included skip bins full of ice, climbing over a cattle truck and scaling three metre high fences. After approximately 45metres, the first of the TAS boys came home, with everyone finishing within the next 30metres. It was wonderful to see the boys stand and cheer as the last group of Year 8 students crossed the line. Events such as this do not have a winner, as the whole idea is of participation and getting out of one’s comfort zone. I was so very impressed with the willingness of the boys to accept this challenge after such a busy week and in particular wish to congratulate Mac Metcalf, Ben McElroy, Jack Sewell and Hamish Tydd on a wonderful performance.

Mr James Pennington
The Cricket Report

Our First XI were finally able to play a game of cricket after washouts, a bye and a team not arriving at the ground. After a tiring week on various activities, the team scored an impressive 9/209 from 41 overs with Dan Lethbridge and Lachlan Thomas scoring 50’s. Unfortunately the strong Hillgrove team were able to reach our score in the 33rd over.

One of our Second grade teams, TAS White, continued their winning ways with an easy victory over Ex-Services. After bowling them out for 75 with Andrew Knight continuing his good form with the outstanding bowling figures of 5/12. He was presented with the game ball at the end of the game for his outstanding achievement. TAS White overtook the score in the 10th over with plenty of 4’s and 6’s scores by Will Brissett and Cai Spiers.

This is the last round of matches for Junior Cricket (Under 16’s and below) this year with the next game in term 1 next year. I would like to thank all the coaches and managers for the smooth running of cricket and for allowing the boys to enjoy playing cricket for TAS. I would also like to thank all parents for the support you have provided for your son and the coaches.

Here is list of notable performances over the last two weeks of cricket.

**Batting**

- Dan Lethbridge 98
- James Wicks 63
- Wally Davidson 57
- Henry Smith 54 no
- Toby Smith 52 no
- Dan Lethbridge 52
- Lachlan Thomas 50
- Angus Smith 50
- Ryan Schmitt 47
- Toby Smith 45 no

**Bowling**

- Andrew Knight 5/12
- Andrew Knight 4/5
- Lucas Atkin 4/19
- Harry Jackson 3/20
- Joe Alcorn 2/11
- Gus Davidson 2/13
- Luke Vagg 2/14

Here is list of notable performances over the last two weeks of cricket.

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<thead>
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<th>Cricket Team Draw Week 9</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1st XI</strong> v City</td>
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<td>2nd XI Blue v Hillgrove Brumbies</td>
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<td>2nd XI White BYE</td>
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<td>Under 16 Blue v TAS White</td>
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<td>Under 16 White v TAS Blue</td>
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<td>Under 14 Blue v TAS White</td>
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<td>Under 14 Yellow BYE</td>
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<td>Under 14 White v CSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 12 v Guyra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 10 v Ex-Services</td>
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<td>Under 9 v Guyra</td>
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**MUSIC MATTERS**

**Booking in for Instrumental and Vocal Lessons for 2016**

Are you interested in learning an instrument or taking voice lessons next year? Lessons are available on a broad range of instruments. Getting in early is the best plan as our music tutor spots fill up quickly in the new year. Perhaps you would like to ‘try before you buy’ and have a ‘taster’ session with a tutor first? We can arrange one in the first weeks of Term 1 and then students can decide if they would like to have regular lessons. Instruments can be hired at TAS for a termly fee and are serviced by TAS to keep them in good order. Tuition enrolment forms are on the TAS website under Music. Please contact the music team to have a chat if you would like more information.

**Annual Instrument Recall**

Instruments have been checked this week and will be ready for collection by Thursday. Thank you for your support in keeping our hire instruments in peak condition!

Lastly, we wish to sincerely thank TAS ensemble members, music students and also to their parents and guardians. We appreciate your year long commitment to our music program at TAS and understand what it takes to get to lessons and rehearsals, and to practice and perform. We hope you have enjoyed participating in the events this year and anticipate many more exciting performances in 2016.

Merry Christmas to all....

Ms Roobol, Mrs Butcher, Mr Dunham, Mr Finco and Mrs Broadbent

**REMINDER: Lesson Cancellations by End of this Term**

A timely reminder that if students wish to cease lessons this term the tutor must be notified by the end of this term to avoid another term’s fees. Students - If you wish to try for another lesson time slot please have a chat to your tutor by the end of this term. At the end of each term there is often some shuffling around of lessons and a more suitable spot might come up next term if you ask.
The time has come….

This is a good thing, too. I’m pleased to report that the Activities for all year groups are completed and that students are well, though from the looks on faces, especially at yesterday’s Carols Service, very tired. Such tiredness is not entirely attributable to the activities just completed – it’s more the manifestation of a year just ‘done’. The good news is that we’ve days to go and, on this note, I hope all goes well for all!

Academic work does continue – ‘loose ends are being tied up’, cadet gear is being returned, practices for music, our final Middle and Senior School Assemblies and also the School’s Speech Day will occur this week and of course boarding students will begin their clean up in their house. In short, while general activities have ceased, they’re all replaced by new ones in preparation for the Christmas break.

We’re looking forward to welcoming parents to our end of year functions and even though we’re likely to see you before you read this we hope that your time at TAS this week is an enjoyable one. Certainly, I’m looking forward to catching up with you, even for a brief chat as we go to various activities that concern your children.

To give some idea of how valuable and also the variety of end of term activities are, this edition of TAS Talks will contain images of your sons’ engagement in a number of them. Last week I was lucky to be involved in a number of them.

On Monday we welcomed boys from Mosman Prep and I went on their excursion to Uralla’s McCrossin’s Mill on Wednesday. It was good this year to see so many parents at the Affamato restaurant. This was not a planned activity as such but it was an occasion to speak to people who kindly took billets from Mosman. Special thanks go Mrs Kirsty Brunsdon, Ms Genevieve Chick, Mr Luke Polson and Ms Amy Symonds for their organization.

I also went to Nymboida to see the Year 7 and 8 boys. I’m not sure how I became involved in it, but I participated (badly I think) in the bridge building activities with three groups of Year 7 boys.

Special thanks also go to Fiona Taber for her masterful organisation, yet again, of the Year 7 cadets. There’s no other description for it - her organization of the week at Nymboida was excellent - no mean achievement especially considering the weather conditions (40 metres on Thursday!) and the number of activities that Fiona had to oversee.

In between times I saw a number of parents about various matters and Mrs Susi Redhead and I were able to get much work done on our Final Assembly arrangements. Needless to say, perhaps, but the week was ‘full’ and tiring but, as indicated, a productive one and practically every person I spoke to was happy.

In fact, 2015 has been ‘full’ and I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support of us. On the whole, it’s been very productive and I believe we’ve only been able to achieve what we have because of amazingly hard-working staff and boys who have been accommodating. Of course, there have been occasions when, for whatever reason, ‘things’ have been shaky, but these situations have been managed well enough and all they do is confirm that we’re normal. To be perfect all the time is almost impossible – especially when we remind ourselves that we’re dealing with young adolescents.

We’re just about to embark on the year’s longest (and definitely the warmest) holiday break: whatever it is you do and wherever it is you go, I hope your time with family and friends is wonderful and safe. Be of good cheer and have a happy Christmas holiday. Again, here’s to some good soaking rain.

Good wishes to all,

Mr Mark Harrison
Head of Middle School
At this very busy time of the year, I would not like to let the chance go past without taking the last ditch opportunity to speak about Peter Pan Jr. I am so pleased that it was such a success, this realised from the fantastic participation and reaction of our students, as well as from our audiences. They have all raved about the performances of the children and, of course, those responsible for getting the whole show across the line. I include the thanks delivered by a couple of our Year 5 Pirates on our final night, Ben Rowe and Hugo Catterall…. Tonight has been fantastic fun and on behalf of all of the students, we would like to say how much we have enjoyed the whole experience - not just the performances but the rehearsals as well! We have all learnt so much from so many people and we would like to thank them.

We have most of us here so, please thank our wonderful stage crew and Liaison Parents, all of whom gave up loads of time to be with us.

Mr Terry Cooke - thank you so much for taking the time out to take so many excellent photos. These will be available to all and we will provide you with the details soon. To Mr Warwick Dunham and Anthony Carlon, you are such professionals. Thank you for your expertise and ability to improvise. Mrs Lucy Adams and Mrs Teesh Wright - the amount of time you put into organising and creating the costumes was huge and they look so good! Mr James White - the sets are stunning. In fact, they are so good we plan to auction them off after the show. To Cal Hunter - you have given up weeks of your time and just when you thought School was over having done your HSC. Please accept this gift from us all! What an absolutely brilliant atmosphere here tonight and what better time to thank our Musical Directors. Mrs Butcher - you are a genius! Even we don’t know how you get us to perform so well and Ms Roobol, singing is also now our passion. Please accept these flowers as our thank you.

And finally, without your vision, fantastic guidance and above all else you immense patience Mrs Cleaver, this musical would never have found the wings to fly like it has. These flowers and our heartfelt thanks are from everyone who has seen the performance and everyone who was involved in the event itself. Thank You!
And finally from me in 2015, thank you from all of our Junior School staff for your support throughout the year. We talk a lot about our school community and this year, like so many others, has been a shining example of collaboration and progress. In particular, I take this opportunity to thank Ms Tabitha Dowse who has been with us throughout the year on various classes, replacing teachers who have taken Long Service Leave and Mrs Gerry Vanzella, who has taught in Transition and Year 2. They have both embraced the opportunity to work with our school community and formed strong relationships with their classes. We farewell and thank Mrs Maria Craven, who has taught our Christian Development classes and lead us in Chapel. We thank our Gaps from this term, Kenneth Kamathi and Daniel Bermudez, both of whom have done an outstanding job supporting all our teachers in class. Theirs is not an easy job and they have carried out their duties with grace and cheerfulness. Lastly this year, we farewell Mrs Alison Evans as she returns to Middle School for the start of the new year. Her time in Junior School has been characterised by her efficiency, her compassion for our students and for her calmness, often in the face of total chaos. I take the blame for that (!), and know that her enormous capacity to assist others will be missed.

As mentioned previously, you will be able to read about your children’s progress when the reports are finalised and mailed to you along with the Headmaster’s end of year letter - we apologise for not being able to have them to you all earlier. Good luck and best wishes to those leaving Junior School and we look forward to seeing our returning and new students next year. Have a wonderful Christmas break and may it be happy and restful.

Mr Ian Lloyd
Head of Junior School